

Dialogue For Diversity

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

9 May 2013 at 11.00 a.m.

At 28 Brookvale Avenue, Belfast, BT14 6BW

Present: Alan McGuckian (Chair), Terry Howard, Pat Davis

Apologies: Kate Martin, Frank Brady.

In Attendance: Brendan MacPartlin (Treasurer), Brian Lennon (Company Secretary)

1. **Minutes:** The minutes of the 2012 AGM were approved
Proposed: Terry Howard; seconded: Pat Davis

2. **Appointment of Director**

Kate Martin, as a non-member of the Company was appointed a Director for the coming year.

Proposed: Terry Howard; seconded: Pat Davis

3. **Appointment of Management Committee**

The following were appointed as members of the Management Committee:

- Brendan McPartlin
- Michael Bingham
- Kate Martin
- Frank Brady
- Brian Lennon

Proposed: Terry Howard; seconded: Pat Davis

4. **Treasurer's Report**

- Accounts for the financial year have been approved by DMC Consultants, 8 Ashley Heights, Portadown BT61 1QE. These accounts are laid out below as Appendix One.
- The accounts were accepted:
Proposed Alan McGuckian, seconded Terry Howard

5. **Chairman's Report**

5.1. **Aims**

Dialogue For Diversity was set up in Northern Ireland in 2009 by Irish and British Jesuits and people from other Churches to develop to develop more respect and esteem for all groups in society, especially the marginalized, and to coordinate the work of the Society of Jesus in the social sector in Northern Ireland.

5.2. **What did we do?**

Five projects operate under the legal umbrella of Dialogue For Diversity:

1. Community Support
2. Migrant Support Service
3. Dialogue for Diversity
4. The Reform of the Church
5. Local community empowerment.

5.2.1. **Community Support**

Initially set up as a pilot project in 2011, Community Support is now well established. It offers post-release mentoring and support for newly released prisoners. In order to do this volunteers visit the prisons regularly to build up relationships with prisoners prior to release.

In the past year we:

- Visited over 500 prisoners inside, 190 once and some over five times. At least 30 others were referred to other agencies. 24 signed on for post-release support. Of these, most were met on a weekly basis for up to one hour for a chat, support and encouragement.

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An important aim was also to link them with existing resources. Those who did not seek post-release support learnt about the project, met one of our volunteers, and may well seek support in the future.

- Very good relationships were established with other NGOs such as the Quaker Service, NIACRO and Prison Fellowship, and also with statutory bodies, the Prison Service, Probation. Within Magilligan the Prison Development Unit and many staff were particularly supportive. So also was the Offender Management Unit in Maghaberry. Chaplains in both prisons also helped us. We also made mutually useful links with solicitors and courts. This allowed us to have some effective input into decisions.
- The main benefit to prisoners of the project was probably encouragement. The dice is loaded heavily against people coming out of prison. They are formally or informally barred from a wide variety of jobs. They may be isolated from families and have difficulties with housing. The majority suffer from addictions. Many have low educational achievement. In these circumstances it is difficult for people not to be hopeless. The very strict enforcement of licensing conditions can add to this sense of powerlessness: many have said that they are likely to be breached anyway, so why bother trying. On the other hand, others have responded positively to their licensing conditions precisely because they do not want to go back inside. For some, the weekly sessions with their Community Support volunteer is the only important conversation they have with anyone who is not a statutory official who wants to see them about their crime.
- Initially Community Support was hesitant to take on sex offenders. However, we began to do so on a case-by-case basis and ended up with a significant number. We have found it important to make statutory agencies aware of our meetings, and also both the prisoner and the volunteer are clear about any licensing conditions that have been imposed. Given the isolation of sex offenders, offering support of this kind is important.
- Towards the end of the period under review we decided to change our name from 'Community Chaplaincy' to 'Community Support'.
- A new leaflet was designed and printed by prisoners in Magilligan.
- Funding: for most of this year we were seriously underfunded. Our work increased faster than we had anticipated. However, £15,000 has now been secured for the coming year from the Stephen's Green Trust (through the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice), Probation and the Lottery.

5.2.2. Migrant Support Service (MSS) Annual Report, 31 March 2013

The Migrant Support Service (MSS) of Dialogue for Diversity began operations in September 2010 to contribute to integration of the migrant community of Drumcree. It aims:

to provide information, signposting and advice on accessing public goods such as employment, housing, welfare and health services;

to teach English as a second language;

and to provide opportunities for intercultural encounter.

To achieve these aims MSS maintains an Advisory Service Office and a Language Training facility. It is the responsibility of the Migrant Support Worker to maintain the advisory service and of the Coordinator to maintain the Language Training. A grant of £4500 from John Moores Foundation went towards the salary of the Migrant Support Worker from April 2012 to March 2013. Lawyer and Immigration Specialist Abed Natur volunteers part time. Four receptionists volunteer part time. 2,500 interviews were held from April 2012 to March 2013.

Advisory Service

No. of cases on file	584
No. of Interviews April '12 – March 13	2,500
Estimated number of people affected	1,000

The issues presented included: Employment (job applications and CVs); Housing (mediating with landlords; housing benefits); Benefits (job seekers, employment support allowance, pension credits, child benefits); PAYE (over and under payment); Health Services (form filling); Education (liaising with schools); and passport applications; Legal advice was given on immigration, family and crime issues.

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The language learning facility, Garvaghy Language Training, provides four levels of English training for six hours each per week, at levels 1,2,3 and 4 (corresponding to CEF levels A1, A2, B1,B2).

Schedule of courses

Level of training	Duration: hrs p. week x no. of weeks	No. of courses per annum	No. of students
Pre Entry	2hrs p.w. x 10wks	3	48
Level 1	6 hrs p.w.x 15wks	2	32
Level 2	6 hrs p.w.x 15wks	2	32
Level 3	6 hrs p.w.x 15wks	2	32
Level 4	6 hrs p.w.x 15wks	2	32
Total			176

Southern Regional College provides tuition and rent for the Pre-Entry course. 5 EFL qualified volunteers teach the other four courses. A further five volunteers act as 'conversation partners'. Jobs and Benefits Portadown regularly refer clients to the course as part of their Job Seekers plan but courses are mostly at capacity level.

Intercultural Encounter

In November 2012 DFD, in collaboration with other bodies hosted a showing of a drama to commemorate the centenary of the Ulster Covenant. A wide cross section of society, although not including migrants, attended and took part in follow up discussions of the play and of the historic events commemorated. There is some cross community mixing among the volunteers of MSS, and among the student body.

Main costs

- Rent and overheads for Unit F largely covered by Lloyds NI Grant;
- Rent and overheads for Unit B largely covered by Neighbourhood Renewal grant;
- Migrant Support Worker's Salary covered in the past year by John Moores Foundation and matched by raised funds.

Future Outlook

The demand for present services remains higher than our capacity to meet them. The rental and overheads of the office and classroom are secure for at least the coming 12 months. The salary of the migrant support worker is not yet secured for the coming 12 months.

MSS has provided services in a professional style. Should reflection on the experience reveal issues that should be addressed through advocacy it is hoped that partnership with other groups, such as Stronger Together, will be a means towards this end.

5.2.3. Dialogue Project

During the year one residential was held to facilitate dialogue between Loyalists and Republicans from 16-17 February 2013 in Monaghan. It was held at a particularly appropriate time, as the flags protest in towns around Northern Ireland was at its height. Dissident Republican activity had also increased.

The residential was oversubscribed: 24 attended. A striking feature was that when Republicans and Loyalists worked separately they came up with no particular reasons to need each other politically. This may be progress in that Loyalists were not as consumed with Republicans in the past, but it further emphasises the segregation in the community. These dialogues, along with other efforts, have made an impact at a leadership level. But there is a huge mass of people behind the leaders that have not met people from opposing groups.

Members of DFD regularly attended Clergy Fraternal in Portadown and Armagh. These meetings are notable for the relaxed, informal atmosphere in which they now take, which is quite different from the tensions of the past.

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Brian Lennon took part in an effort to revamp the Faith and Politics Group. With others he was one of the founders of the group in 1983, and many documents were produced which commented on the Troubles from a Christian faith perspective. While several meetings were held it proved impossible to sustain the group. However, the notes from the discussions may be part of a publication on which Brian is working with Tim Kinahan, a Church of Ireland member of the group. A second outcome from these meetings was that Brian agreed to put all the documents produced by the group on a web site, where they are now available to scholars.

5.2.4. Local community empowerment

Michael Bingham continues as Chair of Drumcree Trust. The community centre is being used by people from all over Portadown. The youth group remains strong. Many of the migrants live in the local area, so the Migrant Support Service also helps with local empowerment. Brian Lennon continues to support SPRING in Armagh which runs a project for about 90 local young people. He also runs a weekly session with alcoholics in the Missionary Sisters hostel.

5.2.5. Church reform

Frank Brady is a member of the Armagh Diocesan Commission and Brian Lennon is a member of the Justice sub-commission. The latter is at an advanced stage of organising a pilot survey of two areas in Armagh city and two in Louth on attitudes to the Church. As well as listening to what people are saying it is hoped that this survey may build links with people who are alienated.

Brian took part in a BBC 'Sunday Sequence' discussion (27/4/12) on the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith censorship of Brian D'Arcy in the *Sunday World*. He wrote a piece on the Association of Catholic Priests AGM for *Eureka*, the Jesuit publication in Australia (15/5/12), and he published an article on dealing with difference in the Church in the *Irish News* (15/3/13). He also wrote an article on injustice in the process for dealing with theologians. This will be published in *The Furrow* (April 2013). He also reviewed Claire Mitchell and Gladys Ganiel *Evangelical Journeys for Studies Spring 2013*.

The Churches Together in Portadown and the Clergy Group in Armagh both lead to very good relations between clergy. In Portadown, the local Inter-Church Forum also continues to meet. This involves mostly lay people.

8. Internal Jesuit matters

During the year the Iona community hosted Janez Melnikovs, an ordained Jesuit Novice, for several weeks. The group continued periodic discussion of the pros and cons of developing a centre to host the various projects. We also held one meeting with the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice in Dublin about the possibility of a North-South conference mapping the work done by NGOs supporting prisoners.

Conclusion

The past year has seen a solid growth in the work of Dialogue For Diversity. The Migrant Service has developed. Community Support has moved from being a pilot project to for which is recognised in the sector. Overall, this has been a good year in terms of the group bedding down, becoming known as a project that can offer a real service, developing relationships with prisoners, and increasing the number engaged in on-going support post-release.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 12.30 p.m.

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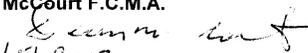
Appendix One

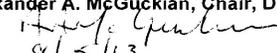
Dialogue for Diversity Income and Expenditure to 31st March 2013				
	Consolidated	Migrants Account	Community Support	Dialogue for Diversity
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Donations	9,813.58	9,463.58	350.00	-
Grants	12,126.48	9,030.52	-	3,095.96
Rental Income	400.00	400.00	-	-
PBNI	3,250.00	-	3,250.00	-
Bank Rec.	48.98	3.76	44.70	0.52
Other	378.31	-	378.31	-
Bank Transfers	6,215.08	-	3,100.97	3,114.11
Total Income	32,232.43	18,897.86	7,123.98	6,210.59
Expenditure				
Bank Charges	230.53	87.38	93.15	50.00
Community Chaplaincy	1,125.66	1,125.66	-	-
Conference Expenses	479.50	479.50	-	-
Equipment	3,535.10	3,535.10	-	-
Volunteer Expenses	3,672.94	-	3,631.12	41.82
Insurance	561.69	561.69	-	-
Rent	5,493.60	5,493.60	-	-
Facilitation(Inc Travel)	1,622.20	-	-	1,622.20
Payroll Costs	8,876.32	8,876.32	-	-
Utilities	1,582.29	1,582.29	-	-
Office Supplies	209.44	209.44	-	-
Residential	2,775.46	-	-	2,775.46
Transfers	3,540.04	-	2,425.93	1,114.11
Library	10.00	10.00	-	-
Total Expenditure	33,714.77	21,960.98	6,150.20	5,603.59
Net Income(Expenditure)	- 1,482.34	- 3,063.12	973.78	607.00
Opening Bank Balance	7,029.99	7,377.38	-343.62	- 3.75
Closing Bank Balance	5,547.65	4,314.24	630.16	603.25

Bank Reconciliation

Balance per bank statement at 31st March 2013	6,543.14	4,875.93	630.16	1,037.05
less o/st cks	995.49	561.69	-	433.80
Balance per bank	5,547.65	4,314.24	630.16	603.25

I declare that these accounts represent a true and fair view of the Income and Expenditure Account for Dialogue and Diversity as at the 31st March 2013

Name: Denis McCourt F.C.M.A.
Signature 
Date 7/5/2013

Name: Alexander A. McGuckian, Chair, Dialogue for Diversity
Signature 
Date 9/5/13

DMC Business Consultancy
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